

7-007 1966 Sevenoaks squatting
Letter

c/o Brian Richardson
Greenways
Knockholt
near Sevenoaks
Kent

August 24th., 1966

Dear Mairin *Healy*

Well, here we are up a green lane in the middle of Kent squatting on Lord Stanhope's land - local arch-enemy of the travellers. We're not quite sure what we feel about England at the moment; it certainly seems very foreign. The people are so self-satisfied, confident and assured that we can't see how we're ever to get through to them. At the moment we're staying with some "new-wave" type Anarchists who have been mixed up with the travellers around here and have been concerning themselves with a hostel for the homeless run by Kent County Council : the King Hill Hostel which has been featured in the Observer lately.

We're really missing old Ireland and wondering when we'll get back. For the next month we're safely tucked away up this lane in the trailer - and I don't think Lord Stanhope is even going to notice us. But in October we'll be forced to venture out into the big wide world - London and its seething millions. Venni starts her training course, as you know, in the middle of October and before that we're going over to France (only a step from here) to help organise this great gathering of Gypsy people.

I went down to the Customs House the day before we left and bullied them into making an extra fast search for Johnny Connor's birth registration. Unfortunately, they found he was not registered and have issued a Certificate of Non-Registration. The passport office will therefore require a copy of his Baptismal Certificate to be sent in with the Certificate of Non-Registration.

So now we have to get on to Johnny either to give us his Baptismal Certificate or to tell us where he was baptised - and then we have to write to the presbytery for it.

I wanted to get his passport application into the office before we left, but this extra complication made it impossible.

Please will you see that a copy of his Baptismal Certificate goes into the office with the other papers, which I now enclose? I'm sorry to have to ask you but I can't do much from here.

I'm writing to him c/o Mrs. Toft, 45 Thomas Davies St.,
Inchicore
asking him to send you, at once, the Baptismal Certificate or details about where a copy can be obtained. Or to ring you up.

When his passport comes through (it takes about three weeks) you will be able to get his ticket to France, as we discussed on the phone.

He will be working with Toft's Amusements at Ballinasloe the week before the meeting in France, and will be travelling as follows:

Saturday, October 8th

Depart Ballinasloe (train)	8.55	a.m.
Arrive Dublin (Kingsbridge)	11.25	a.m.
Depart Dublin Airport	6.45	p.m.
Arrive Paris Airport (Le Bourget)	8.15	p.m.

So he will have seven hours in Dublin and should make his way over to you to collect his ticket (a single costing £16 4s. on the 6.45 p.m. flight to Paris on Saturday, October 8th.) and some money to get back to Ireland via England.

He will travel back with us and so have a chance to meet some of the travellers in the south of England before going back to Dublin. We may be arranging some kind of meeting in London.

The only other outstanding business, which John Molloy asked me to tell you about, is that the Gaelic Weekly sent him a bill - unexpectedly - for doing the programmes etc for the concert and the Gaiety. Yvonne thinks they may not press for payment but it may be necessary sometime to write and ask them to be kind enough to drop the request.

So there are just three things, to summarise :

- 1 To send in John Connors passport application with Baptismal Certificate plus Cert. of Non-Registration plus Postal Order for 30/-
- 2 Buy him a ticket for the 6.45 p.m. flight to Paris on Saturday October 8th and, if possible, see him onto it !
- 3 The Gaelic Weekly bill.

Several Gypsy people from Kent are keen to go to the meeting, among them Soli (Soloman) Brown who is a distant relation of Michael Brown who was at Cherry Orchard, you remember, and is now out at Finglas. As I was saying on the phone, I'm going to do everything I can to press the authorities in Ireland, North and South, from France and as I'm to be in charge of the publicity in the English-speaking world I hope to make some impact. Having Johnny and others there will help us to put up a good case. The meeting is being kept a closely guarded secret until the last minute, by the way.

If there are any difficulties write and let us know - or even ring up in emergency (make it a personal call so I can get from the caravan to the house)

We wish you all the best, Mairin, and expect
to be back in Ireland in the not too far
distant future.

Much love
Gratian and Jenni

PS Funny enough, just before we left I met
Noel Browne in Moore Street and more or less
pledged that we would return